

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6916

C O N F I D E N T I A L FREETOWN 213

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, US, XA

SUBJ: NEW POLICY INITIATIVES IN AFRICA

REF: STATE 311031

1. I WELCOME THE INDICATION GIVEN IN REFTEL THAT THE DEPARTMENT IS MAKING EFFORTS TO ESTABLISH BETTER RELATIONS WITH SOME OF THE SMALLER, MODERATE AFRICAN COUNTRIES WHO HAVE TRADITIONALLY BEEN OUR FRIENDS. WHILE THE DRAFT PAPER DPES NOT INCLUDE SIERRA LEONE, NOR WOULD I CLAIM FOR PRESIDENT STEVENS THE KIND OF LEADERSHIP ROLE WHICH SENGHOR AND OTHER MODERATES HAVE, I BELIEVE THAT THE US COULD USEFULLY FOLLOW SOME OF THE PROPOSALS WHICH ARE OUTLINED IN REFTEL WITH SIERRA LEONE. AS DEPARTMENT NOTAS, PRESIDENT NIMI RI OF SUDAN WILL

SUCCEED PRESIDENT BONGO OF GABON AS OAU CHAIRMAN AND WILL BE FOLLOWED IN TURN IN 1979 BY PRESIDENT TOLBERT OF LIBERIA. OUR UNDERSTANDING IS THAT PRESIDENT STEVENS WILL ASSUME THE CHAIRMANSHIP OF OAU IN 1980.

2. I WISH TO RECALL TO THE DEPARTMENT THAT SIERRA LEONE HAS BEEN HELPFUL IN CERTAIN INSTANCES IN INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AFFAIRS, MOST RECENTLY IN ITS CO-SPONSORSHIP OF THE FAVORABLE RESOLUTION ON GUAM. ADDITIONALLY, PRESIDENT STEVENS
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HAS SPOKEN STRONGLY IN SUPPORT OF BRITISH-AMERICAN INITIATIVES IN SOUTHER RHODESIA AND HAS INDICATED ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS THAT HE WELCOMES THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION POLICIES IN SOUTHERN AFRICA.

3. I AGREE THAT THE DRAFT PAPER OFFERS FAIRLY THIN GRUEL, PARTICULARLY WHEN IT COMES TO ALLOCATION OF RESOURCES. WHEN

WE TALK, FOR EXAMPLE, ABOUT SUPPORTING EFFORTS BY COASTAL STATES TO "PROTECT" AND DEVELOP THEIR OFF-SHORE RESOURCES UNDER BILATERAL AND LOS ARRANGEMENTS, IT'S HARD TO SEE WHAT THIS MEANS EXCEPT IN TERMS OF INCREASED AID PROGRAMS. THERE, IN SPITE OF RHETORIC INDICATING INCREASED ASSISTANCE FOR AFRICA, WE APPEAR TO BE RUNNING INTO BUDGETING PROBLEMS. ON THE PSYCHOLOGICAL FRONT, I BELIEVE THERE IS MUCH ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT EVEN THOUGH, BECAUSE OF OUR OWN POLICY CONSIDERATIONS, WE PREFER TO IGNORE THE REALISTIC CONCERNS OF CERTAIN LEADERS ABOUT EXPANDING ARMS TRANSFER PROGRAMS. FOR EXAMPLE, I BELIEVE THAT A TOKEN MILITARY TRAINING PROGRAM FOR SIERRA LEONE, BECAUSE IT WAS REQUESTED BY PRESIDENT STEVENS AND GIVEN UNUSUAL SUPPORT BY PRESIDENT TOLBERT, WOULD HAVE BEEN WORTH SEVERAL TIMES OVER IN PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECT ITS SMALL DOLLAR COST. IT WOULD APPEAR, HOWEVER, THAT THE PROSPECTS FOR SUCH A PROGRAM ARE DIM INDEED. ON THE OTHER HAND, MODERATE AFRICAN COUNTRIES DO AGREE WITH THE DEPARTMENT'S VIEW THAT LOCAL DISPUTES SHOULD BE RESOLVED THROUGH ADDITIONAL DIPLOMATIC APPROACHES. CERTAINLY THE GOVERNMENT OF SIERRA LEONE AND PRESIDENT STEVENS WERE VERY CONCERNED THAT THE RECENT OAU MEDIATION MEETING ON ETHIOPIA AND SUDAN SHOULD BE SEEN TO BE A SUCCESS.

4. I STRONGLY SUPPORT THE IDEA OF ENGAGING IN A DIALOGUE WITH AFRICAN CHIEFS OF STATE IN ORDER TO WIDEN AND DEEPEN OUR TIES WITH THEM. GIVEN THE SENSE OF HIERARCHY WHICH PREVAILS IN AFRICA, HOWEVER, SUCH EXCHANGES OF CORRESPONDENCE SHOULD BE CONFIDENTIAL

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BE BETWEEN AFRICAN LEADERS AND THE PRESIDENT TO REAP FULL PSYCHOLOGICAL VALUE. WITH REGARD TO VISITS OF TOP ADMINISTRATION OFFICIALS THERE IS A PROBLEM AS WE SEE IT, SINCE ALMOST INEVITABLY THESE VISITS ARE SEEN, AT LEAST IN WEST AFRICA, AS THE FORERUNNER OF ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE. IF AT ALL POSSIBLE SUCH VISITORS SHOULD HAVE SOMETHING IN THEIR POCKETS WHICH CAN BE USED TO MEET THIS EXPECTATION. FINALLY, I HEARTILY CONCUR WITH THE PROPOSAL TO ASSURE GREATER ACCESS TO SENIOR US OFFICIALS FOR VISITING AFRICAN LEADERS AND THEIR WASHINGTON AMBASSADORS. THE PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPORTANCE OF THIS KIND OF ACCESS TO AFRICAN LEADERS CANNOT BE OVER-RATED.

5. I HOPE THE DEPARTMENT WILL CONTINUE TO KEEP POSTS SUCH AS FREETOWN INFORMED ABOUT NEW POLICY INITIATIVES EVEN IF SUCH POSTS ARE NOT INCLUDED IN THE LIST OF COUNTRIES TO WHICH THE POLICY IS DIRECTED.

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